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MADRAS WAR REVIEW

A WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE WORLD WAR

VOL. IV FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1943 No. 37

As in battle so.....

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Madras War Review

A WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE WORLD WAR

VOL. IV FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1943 No. 37

TUNISIA DAY.—His Excellency Sir Arthur Hope, Leader of the National War Front, and others at the saluting base of the Tunisia Day march past.

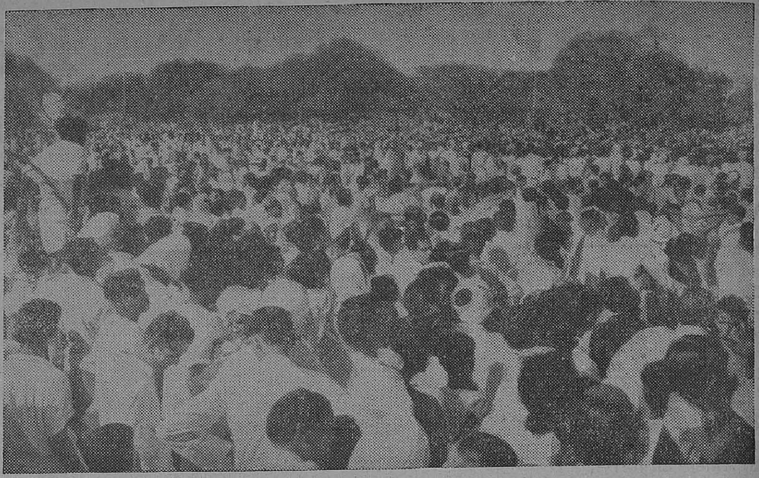
RUNNING COMMENTARY

Tunisia Day: Celebrations in Madras. Madras celebrated the magnificent Tunisian Victory and the first anniversary of the National War Front on a very grand scale on Friday last (May 21). It was a perfect day of festivity and rejoicing. In the morning "Victory Songs" were sung over the radio. At 10 a.m. there was an impressive parade of the Fighting Services, and Civil Defence, Police and workers' units at the Island Grounds before a huge concourse of people. His Excellency Sir Arthur Hope, Governor of Madras, took the salute at the march past. In the evening, a huge holiday crowd witnessed an exhibition of feats of strength and weight-lifting, boxing matches, fencing, music and dancing, near the Senate House. Later a public meeting of the citizens of Madras was held in the Senate Hall. His Excellency addressing the gathering reviewed the war situation and explained the significance of the great victory in Africa, but warned the people against an attitude of complacency. His Excellency also gave a broadcast talk at 7-45 p.m. from the Madras station of the A.I.R., in which he said, "We can indeed now say that this is the end of the beginning. We have not only driven the last of the enemy from the African Continent, but have thereby greatly increased the safety of our transports in the Mediterranean." His Excellency paid a special tribute to the Fourth Indian Division which played an important part in the North African battle in general, and the Tunisian Campaign in particular, both in his public speech and in his broadcast talk. The great film *Desert Victory* was a fitting *finale* to a perfect day. It gave an idea, and a vivid idea, of the labour and sweat, blood and toil, that brought about a victory which would live in history till the end of time.

* * * * *

Tunisian Campaign: Berlin's Boast. In his usual weekly Sunday broadcast on May 16, Lord HAW HAW refers to the special communique issued on Thursday (May 13) from HITLER's Headquarters announcing "the end of the Tunisian compaign," and says,

> "It is probably not realized by very many people what an important contribution the valiant and tenacious delaying action of the Axis troops has made . . . Time was needed in order that European defences might be rendered insuperable,



A view of the huge crowd near the Senate House on Tunisia Day.

not only in the north and west, but also in the south. That time was gained by the protection of the North African Campaign."

This is only a sample of the vociferous German propaganda that all that they attempted to do by throwing a large army in North Tunisia last November was only to gain time! They claim that they have gained six invaluable months during which they have been able to construct a "Mediterranean Wall." The German radio and the press have also been laying emphasis on the fact that a "grave emergency" would have been created if an Anglo-American invasion of Southern Europe was staged when the German winter offensive in Russia was in full swing.

This would undoubtedly have been the case, had it been possible to stage such an invasion. If ROMMEL had, for instance, evacuated the remnants of his Afrika Korps from, say, Benghazi, the Allies would still have needed a long period of preparation before they could invade Europe from North Africa. Time was also required for things to settle down in French North Africa, which was considerably affected by the two years of the Vichy regime. Another point that should be noted is that a considerable portion of the Allied troops which landed there last November required further training before they could be put to modern mechanised warfare. Therefore, it is absurd on the part of the Germans to claim that they fought the Tunisian campaign just to gain time.

The object of Hitler in prolonging the Tunisian campaign was to fortify German morale, and more particularly Italian morale, during a very critical period. But he paid a very great price. He made what was really the final phase of the overthrow of the Axis power in Africa into what became in fact the first round of the battle for West Europe. The complete defeat in this round resulted in the loss of some of the best infantry and armoured divisions of Germany and Italy. After the Tunisian campaign, the Luftwaffe was much worse off than it was ever before.

* * * * *

Shorter Mediterranean Route: Greater Mobility and Striking Power. The great Allied victory in Tunisia has the effect of releasing Allied shipping amounting to about two million tons. It is now possible to provide continuous fighter protection for our ships all the way from Gibraltar to Port Said. The shorter Mediterranean route as compared with the long Cape route has also its strategic value, and this is bound to have its own influence on the great decisions that are being made in Washington to implement the Casablanca plans. It may also be pointed out that availability of more shipping and a far shorter route will increase the mobility and striking power of the Allies in every theatre of war. Reinforcements and supplies can now be sent to India and the Far East in greater volume and in a shorter time. Referring to this, the *Times* says:

> "It means that armies in Egypt, Syria and Persia could be set in motion with a facility hitherto out of the question; that Turkey can be offered new buttresses in case of Axis aggression; and that Crete and the Balkan Peninsula must be reckoned by the enemy as among his vulnerable points."

The fact to be noted is that the enemy does not know which are the targets that will be chosen for the Allied attack, and so he has to simultaneously defend all the vulnerable points.

* * * * *

Japan's Home Front: Criticisms of Government's War Policy. There is in Japan an association called the "Society for the Study of Total Warfare," under whose auspices the question of home propaganda about the war was discussed recently. Representatives of certain organizations took part in the discussions, a report of which has been published in a recent issue of the Japanese Magazine called *Bungei Shung*. The opinions expressed at the meeting constitute a severe criticism of the Japanese Government's ability to conduct the war efficiently. TERADA, a member of the Society, refers to certain feelings of depression among the people. "When one remembers the universal popular enthusiasm over the Russo-Japanese War," he says, "one realises how vast a difference there is between those days and popular feeling during the last year." SHIMURA, of the Buddhist Sphere League, criticises the crudity of Japanese home propaganda, and says, "It is no use first thing every morning broadcasting gramophone records of songs like 'It does'nt matter how, but we've got to win,' or making patriotic poems, or giving generalised explanations of the war or attempting to define its nature. By doing such things one merely makes oneself ridiculous." SUZUKI, Director of the Society for Repaying Imperial Protection, points out that cold water is immediately poured on anything savouring of incitement to popular enthusiasm, and observes, "It is very disheartening . . . . A great many different opinions about the war are expressed. Some tell the people that it is a war of ideas, some that it is solely a question of military strength, others that it is chiefly economic. Some say that it will last a hundred years. No doubt all of them think that by what they say they are raising the morale of the people. In reality, they are doing

(*Continued on page* 7)

A photograph of the Indian Battalion referred to in the letter published on the previous page.

RUNNING COMMENTARY

(*Continued from page 4*)

just the opposite. To take the line that we must fight for a hundred years is merely another way of saying we shall be beaten."

* * * * *

Production Plans: Higher Wages mean Slackness!

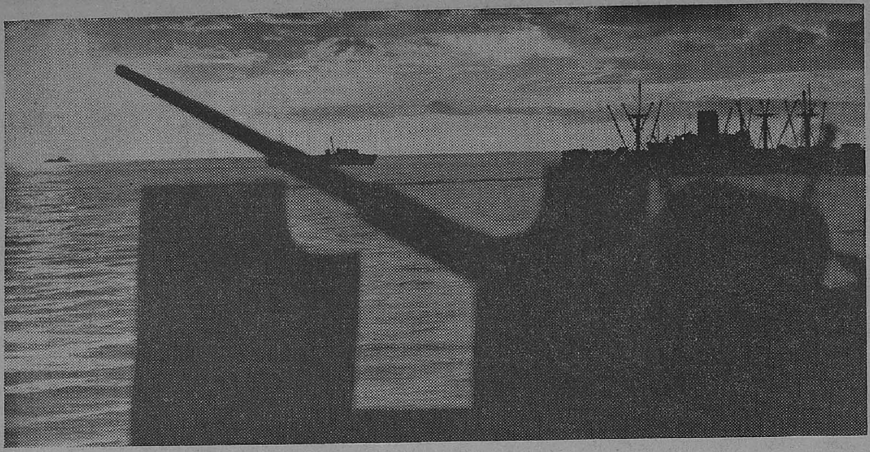
Mr. KOSONOGI, headman of the village of Sannam, north-west of Tokyo, discusses the food problem. He condemns the "mediaeval system of blockade" at present prevalent in Japan. Referring to plans for increased production, Mr. KOSONOGI says, "I regard with very great suspicion all recent plans for increasing production. Any attempt to stimulate work by material means has, on the contrary, the effect of lowering production." He thinks that it is a mistake to suppose that, by increasing wages, production can be increased, as the worker is likely to use his increased wages for pleasure-seeking. He feels that workers consider themselves a privileged class, and this, far from stimulating production, causes only slackness.

Mr. HOZUMI of the economic section of the Throne Aid Association says, "To-day a large proportion of our enemies is to be found in our own country," and these people are infected by British and American ideas to regard production as "a material question, an affair of goods and statistics," and not a "living, elastic force," depending for its full growth on psychological factors. He demands a 'renovation' in the internal life of Japan.

The most sensational contribution to the discussion was made by Mr. SHIMURA. He revealed what a friend of his who had returned from the Southern Regions had told him. That friend said,

"Everyone imagines that the reconstruction of oil-fields and refineries is in the hands of experts sent from Japan. Not at all. It is entirely entrusted to the military, who have got the most rudimentary

(*Continued on page 12*)



Thanks to the Eighth Army winning back Libyan air bases, Royal Air Force fighter protection and the work of the Royal Navy; a series of convoys had been able to carry sufficient supplies to Malta to last for several months. Some of the convoys got through entirely unmolested. Photo shows striking view of Malta-bound convoy and escort at sunset.

Significance of Tunisian Victory

THE Mediterranean Sea has long been the central and vital artery of the physical system of the British Empire. While the gates of this great sea-lane, viz., the Straits of Gibraltar and Suez Canal, were in British hands or under British influence, and provided that at least one littoral was friendly, the empire's communications—from its western possessions and the Dominions of Canada, via Britain herself, to her great eastern subsidiaries, India, Burma, the China Colonies and the Australasia—could be kept open, convenient and expeditious. In peace time this factor was not merely a selfish advantage to Britain. The trade of the whole world benefited. In war-time, the strategic advantages enjoyed by any power in control of the Mediterranean has been obvious in many wars before this one. They were cfentainly not overlooked during he past ten years or so by the several European and Asiatic powers who might conceivably become open enemies of Britain, and other lovers of freedom!

FOREBODINGS

When in 1935(?) the Italian Government, without a "by your leave" to any one (except Germany?) moved 200,000 soldiers into Libya, there were many who blamed the British Government for too tamely accepting the explanation which followed a request to the League of Nations for enlightenment from Italy as to her motive. These critics said that only the strategic value of so uninviting a locality as Libya could be the attraction, and that with Fascism then eveywhere in the ascendant, purely strategic opportunism was justifiably suspect. There were others who bluntly asked what was wrong with a Government who could regard with apparent equanimity the formatition, by a militaristic power, of a military sphere (with great strategic roads, fortified ports, mountain strongholds and huge barbed wire barriers) on a piece of territory which geographically severed the whole system of Imperial communications.

We have suggested that the friendliness or at least neutrality of one littoral of the Mediterranean Sea was an essential to its utility as a main artery of the Empire. Now, during the ten years (1928–38) the south coast of Europe, embracing reactionary Spain, Fascist Italy, the turbulent Balkans and our quondum enemy Turkey, could hardly be counted on as either friendly, or even neutral. On the northern shores of the African continent, however, there appeared until Mussolini started his African empire in Libya—not much to fear from French Algeria, Spanish Morocco, French Tunisia, Italian Tripoli and Cyrenaica, or neutral Egypt. But those critics were undoubtedly right who considered that the Italian militarization of Libya completely spoiled the whole picture.

There was also another aspect of this North African sea-board. Should Southern Europe ever become unified under a single strategic command, and should North Africa also come under the same dispensation, the latter must form a valuable outer crust which would have to be broken through before the "soft underside" of Europe could become vulnerable.

"I TOLD YOU SO!"

In 1939 war came. Enemy submarines immediately swarmed into the Middle Sea (the Italian) islands or Sardinia, Sicily and Pantellaria and the Italian ports in Cyrenaica probably being at their disposal, though Italy was for the time being "neutral"), and started their attacks on merchant vessels. The first direct impact of the war, on India, was the realization that "the Mediterranean was closed." The whole balance of Allied naval strategy, and the system of communications radically changed for the worse, and the worst forebodings of pre-war parliamentary and diplomatic critics had proved only too well-grounded.

THE EVENT.

War had taken Britain and her ally France by surprise. The latter succumbed quickly. The former withstood the fearful impact of the German occupation of the European, Atlantic and North Sea sea-boards, and the Luftwaffe's blitz that was to pave the way for an invasion of Britain. She stood firm to rally the democratic powers against the hateful but increasingly tempting Axis ideology. But for some time she stood alone—while Germany overran country after country, whose food products and war munitions further swelled the advantages her peacetime preparations had given her, over any, or all, of her most powerful opponents.

Then fortunately Hitler made two cardinal blunders. He turned east to Paris instead of west to London; and he opened his treacherous onslaught on Russia. Nevertheless, he gained one of his most valuable objectives, for when his initial successes encouraged his mentor-jackal Mussolini to declare war on the Allies, the Axis confederacy bound itself with strong airfields, ports and roads on the African littoral from Tripoli to Bardia; with island strongholds in the Mediterranian itself in Sardinia, Sicily and Pantellaria) and a fast and numerous fleet for actual naval surface warfare. Nor was it long before German "tourists" and "specialists" were hard at their subversive work in "neutral" French Algeria, at Casablanca and Oran and Algiers in the effort to complete their hold on the whole of Mediterranean coastline from Gibraltar to Suez; while the German armies cleared up the Italian failures in northern Greece, thrust downwards to the capture of Crete, and multiplied their airfields and submarine bases in both these islands and the Dodecanese at the eastern end. *Mare nostrum*, the Italians then called the Mediterranean, and though that braggadacio was both wrong and ephemeral, the Axis could congratulate themselves on the completion of a stranglehold on the communications of the Democracies, whether or not America or any other sympathiser joined the war against them.

THE MATERIAL FACTOR

A few rather obvious points must now be made. When nations are at war sea communications are vital, for only ships can convey troops, arms and stores in adequate quantities. Troop-carrying planes or air transports are only occasional adjuncts; they cannot take

the place of marine transport. Transport ships therefore are the immediate objective of their enemies and they can be attacked either by naval surface craft, or by submarines, or by bombing and torpedoing from the air. The point and counter-point of the affair is something thus: *A* wants to send a ship from Gibraltar to Alexandria. *B* will try to sink her before she gets there and a ship or ships of war cruise about to intercept her. *A* counters by grouping a large number of ships into a convoy and sends a protective naval force with it. *B* tries to scatter and destroy the protecting force, not only by surface attack but also by means of bombers—*if she has air fields within bombing range.* *A*'s reply is to send up fast fighter machines to ward off the bombing attack—*again, if she has airfields within fighting range.*

Note the last two phases of the process because they pertain to the advantage which the Axis gained in the Mediterranean when France collapsed and the Italo-German armies drove eastwards to Libya towards Egypt and the Canal. Henceforward, for the allies to send reinforcements to Egypt, their transports must go either via Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, a journey of some 1,700 miles, or they must send them right round by the Cape of Good Hope and up the Red Sea, a distance of 12,000 miles. The Power in control of the Mediterranean thus had an advantage of over 10,000 miles—in time, a matter perhaps of two months!

Using the short route, the Allies had only one path, viz., the Southern Mediterranean, for Italy and Sicily constituted a long, out-thrust, Axis arm from the other littoral. By the southern course, convoys would have to traverse two "narrows":—

(*a*) Between Pantellaria and Tunis, a distance of 60 miles, or (*b*) between Crete and Bardia, a distance of 250 miles.

The range of enemy bombing aircraft can be taken at at least a 1,200 miles per round trip and of fighters at least 500.

In other words, whether protected by naval vessels, with aircraft carriers accompanying them or not, our convoy must be within easy range of enemy bombers flying from any of the enemy bases just mentioned; whereas, the Allies' fighter aircraft from carriers, or from the Island of Malta, would provide the only opposition to continuous and sustained attack from enemy island bases and the enemy-held African sea-board.

Roughly speaking therefore, except for such desperate ventures as the vital reinforcement of Malta, for instance, allied transports could *not* use the Mediterranean. The Middle Sea "was closed" to us for nearly three years.

THE CHANGED PICTURE

To restore the Empire's lifeline, to save Egypt, to protect India, to reinforce the British army in Palestine and Syria which they protect one of the main supply routes for the Russians, and to invalidate the "outer crust" of Hitlerised Europe, the re-taking of North Africa from Morocco to Alexandria positively *had* to be one of the principal objectives of the Allied High Command. And so the Desert Battle swayed backwards and forwards for nearly three years. America came into the war, but some time had to elapse before her armies could be seen in Africa. Early in 1941 (March) Rommel drove eastwards towards Egypt and the Canal, but was temporarily halted at Tobruk. The British fought him back along the coast and recaptured Bardia, but Rommel's next thrust (26th May 1942) regained both Bardia and Tobruk (fall of Tobruk, June 22nd, 1942) and took him within 60 miles of Britain's vital base at Alexandria. There Auchinleck hung him up at El Alamein (1st July 1942), so the Germans made a desert, instead of a coastwise thrust at Egypt, but failed. Then General Alexander (appointed Commander-in-Chief in place of General Auchinleck, August 19, 1942) resumed the offensive, won the great battle at El Alamein (November 5, 1942) and Halfaya, and drove mightily west and retook Sollum, Bardia, Tobruk, El Agheila (December 1942) and Tripoli (January 23, 1943). American and British troops sprang a world surprise in November 1942 by landing in Algiers and constituted a growing threat to the German rear. Rommel and Von Arnim could still receive reinforcements from Europe over their short supply lines, but with fresh Allied armies west of them, and the indefatigable and relentless Eighth Army now pressing on from El Agheila round the Bay of Sirte towards Tripoli, their position began to look grim. Fighting tenaciously they retreated on all fronts eastwards and northwards towards their last great strongholds of Bizerta and Tunis. And last Friday, the whole of India celebrated the final and complete extermination of the Axis African armies, in the Cape Bon peninsula, and the freeing of the whole continent of Africa from Axis influence.

THE NEW VISTA

The whole southern littoral of the Middle Sea is now in Allied hands. Risks there are and losses there will be, but the Mediterranean is once again open. The Empire's lifeline is restored and the "protective crust" of Hitler's Europe has disappeared. True, the bulk of the Italian fleet is still afloat; true, the Germans still hold a strongly fortified Sicily, Crete and the Dodecanese islands; but, African airfields and ports from Casablanca to Alexandria are in allied hands. Malta is safe for all time, and when allied convoys want to use the Mediterranean, there will be allied bombers and fighters from Tunisia, and bombers from Tripoli and Benghazi, to make the seas unwholesome for Mussolini's sailors, and to force the Axis troops and planes in Sicily, Sardinia and South Italy keep their heads well down. At the eastern end of the sea, Tobruk and Bardia and Alexandria can play the same role. Axis territories everywhere in southern Europe wait trembling for invasion, and Egypt and India are safe from the Hun. When General Smuts proclaimed that the main issue of the World War would be settled in Africa he was not far wrong.

—*A talk broadcast by Capt. G. T. B. Harvey from A.I.R., Madras, on May 21.*

APPRECIATION

Being unaware of their addresses, the Provincial Organizer, National War Front, acknowledges with thanks the courtesy of the signatories of the letters below:

I

MADRAS,
24th May 1943.

DEAR SIR,

I saw the grand march past at the Munroe statue on Friday last, and also the *tamasha* at the Marina. To a loyal citizen like me, both the spectacles were grand indeed. The crowds were in high spirits. Many more would have come to the maidan if the police had not stopped them at the Walaja bridge and Bodyguard grounds.

I have great pleasure in congratulating you and your officers on the success of the events. I pray that Victory may come to us soon.

(Sd.) SYED AMANULLA.

II

MADRAS,
24th May 1943.

SIR,

Most sincerely I offer my humble felicitations on the success of the celebration of Tunisia Day in the city. From the accounts in the papers of the celebration all over India, we, the citizens of Madras, can well feel proud that ours has been grandest show. May you have many more occasions to hold such celebrations! May the Allied cause prosper!

(Sd.) MAQBOOL.

The Entry into Tunis

THE *Times* Tunis correspondent gives the following vivid account of the Allies' entry:—

"Tunis?" the General replied, "it is just over the next ridge. I am putting tanks into it in half an hour. You had better go with them."

So we did.

After all these months of effort, the final fall of Tunis was as easy as that.

We had been chasing tanks all day, first along the Mejez-Tunis road along which transport was pouring into Tunis bumper to bumper and sometimes three deep.

In the fields on either side of the road, infantry were deploying to round up such of the enemy as our swift advance had overlooked or bypassed. At St. Cyprien, we heard that the tanks were away to the left on the hills overlooking Tunis, and it was there that, after endless wanderings over lonely farm tracks, we caught up with them.

THE FINAL CREST

We walked up to the final crest and there was the longed-for city, a bare four miles away below us. Black clouds of smoke hung over Tunis and partly veiled it, for the Germans had already fired some oil dumps and other stores, and new fires were started as we watched.

In the fields just short of the city our armoured cars could be seen working cautiously forward. A few enemy guns still fired, and one 88-mm. kept dropping shells farther along our ridge searching for the tanks assembled behind it. Its smoke was located in the farm away on the left flank, and after a few ranging shots, our mediums obliterated the farm in a smoke of salvo.

A sergeant came up and reported importantly: "Armoured cars are in and the Germans are surrendering by the hundred." A few minutes later, we were in motion and tank after tank was grinding over the crest and down into the valley. After them came a long train of guns and lorried infantry, and our desperately excited driver nosed his way into a stream and carried us down with it. One had vague expectations of a storm of shell fire descending on this huge cavalcade advancing in plain view of the defenders of Tunis but nothing happened.

A CLEAR WAY.

Guns and lorries turned out at intervals from the column and took up their places ready to support the advance of tanks. The tanks themselves left the track and advanced parallel to it in the fields. Our car found the way clear and was able to press on faster.

Soon the track began to take on a semblance of a road and the tanks returned to it in front, before and behind us. Cactus hedges appeared and then Arab houses. The Arabs lined on the road side, saluting gravely. Most of them were young and many mere boys, a few older men looked on without greeting or expression. Then we turned to the corner, and suddenly we were on the metalled road between houses and groups of wildly excited French people who were shouting and clapping and making 'V' signs to us. We were in Tunis.

WITH THEIR HANDS UP

After another half a mile, the procession of tanks came to a halt and we got out of the car to see what was happening. As we watched, we suddenly saw a crowd approaching along the side of the road. As it came nearer, we saw that it was a group of 50 Germans with their hands up. It was led by a middle-aged French civilian in shirt sleeves brandishing a formidable revolver and its flanks were guarded by youths and boys variously armed with German tommy-guns and French sporting-guns. They were students who had managed to steal or conceal arms and had now rounded up this party of Germans whom they knew to be hiding in a certain house. Eagerly they told the tank crews where other groups of Germans were concealed.

As they chattered, another much larger party of prisoners, perhaps 300, appeared under a British escort. They had been rounded up by one tank and two armoured cars and had surrendered after hardly any resistance.

The Key to Africa

By HENRY D. DAVRAY

THE British and American troops in Tunisia find the country greatly different from that which the French zouaves and spahis—foot and horse—first entered in 1880. They had crossed the Algerian border to put an end to the forays of the Kroumir tribes then overrunning their neighbours. The Bey of Tunis was utterly unable to impose his authority on the highland chieftains; he had borrowed money from France, Britain and Italy, and was no more in a position to pay the interest than to refund the loans, his whole country being in a state of anarchy.

The chief of the French Government was then the famous statesman, Jules Ferry. He deemed the time ripe to put the Bey's house in order, the incessant raids of the Kroumirs providing a pretext. After a short campaign, the Berber tribes submitted and a treaty was signed with the Bey, who accepted the French Protectorate, but remained the "Sovereign and Owner" of the "Regency of Tunis."

The first Resident-General was M. Paul Cambon, who was to become later Ambassador of the French Republic to the Court of St. James's and remain in London for twenty-two years, playing an important part in effecting the Entente Cordiale. M. Cambon entirely reorganized the Bey's administration, over which he superimposed French officials. The working of the reorganized Treasury was so efficient, and the prosperity of the country developed so rapidly, that within a few years the Resident-General could refund the foreign loans, beginning with the Italians in order to allay their blatant requests. Henceforward, the budget was balanced and remained so even during the four years of the First Great War.

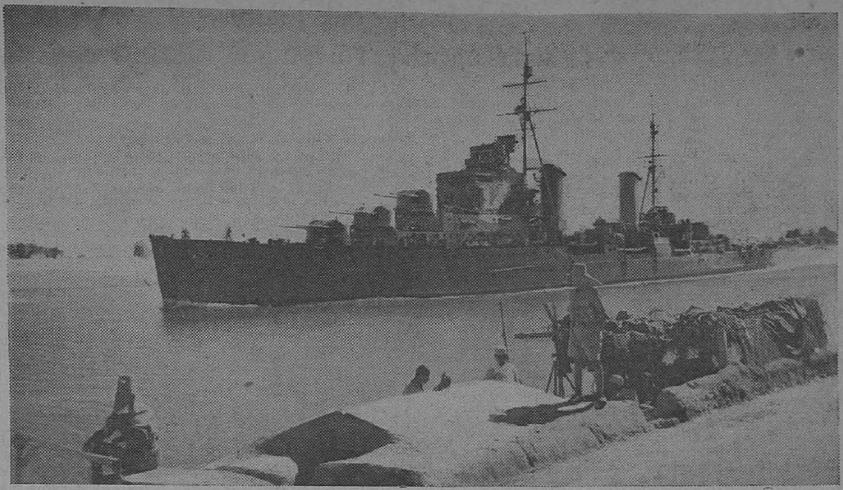
The Regency being a Protectorate, with the Bey as its own "Sovereign and Owner," the electorate has never sent representatives to the Paris Parliament—unlike Algeria, which is administratively incorporated into France and depends on the Ministry of the Interior. In Tunis, the Resident-General and his French staff are appointed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Although agriculture is highly developed in French North Africa, there is practically no heavy industry in spite of the fact that the subsoil is rich in many deposits. Iron, for instance, is to be found all along the mountainous chain that runs from the Atlantic to Bizerta, and specially in Algiers. But those Algerian deposits are not exploited, although enough iron ore could be extracted for melting steel and casting guns and shells for a one hundred years' war or for the more desirable implements of peace. All this mineral wealth remains unused. Why? Because the concessions were granted to companies formed by the same people who own the rich mines of Lorraine and, anxious to avoid competition, they were clever enough to exclude from their agreement a clause compelling them to work their mines.

In Tunisia, however, M. Cambon was not caught napping, and when deposits were discovered in the Regency he imposed on the concessionaires the same "articles and conditions" as have to be accepted in Australia. So the phosphate and iron mines in Tunis have been properly worked. Needless to say, there was no fear that the zinc and manganese deposits would remain unexploited. As it is, the immense phoshate deposits of Metlaoui and of Redeyef yield annually about twenty million tons which are carried by two railway lines to the ports of Sfax and Sousse, where there is modern equipment for loading, surpassed only by Casablanca for the Kourighat phosphates of Morocco.

In the valleys of north Tunisia, between the well-wooded slopes of the hills and mountains, there are very fertile wheat land and vineyards; the plains of the south, which were bare desert sixty years ago, are now covered by immense plantations of olive trees that expand fan-like specially around Sousse and Sfax. They number more than 18 millions. One gets an idea of the increase of value of the desert when one knows that an acre of bare land can be secured for five francs, and, fifteen years after, when the trees bear an average crop, the land changes hands for 400 francs.

The population of Tunisia is prosperous. There are two million Moslems, Arbs and Berbers, mostly attached to the soil that provides them with ample resources. The Jews number 52,000, in the towns mostly, and the majority has acquired French nationality. Europeans, chiefly French and Italians, including a good many



A BRITISH CRUISER PASSES THROUGH SUEZ.—The British light cruiser "Euryalus" *passing an Egyptian Army mine-spotting post on the Suez Canal en route to join up with the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet at Port Said.*

Maltese, number 200,000; and, whatever Fascist propaganda may say, the majority of these are French. The Italian colony is composed largely of a rabble of street-porters, dockhands, and unskilled labourers who live in conditions inferior even to the poorest natives. It is certainly not to them that the economic development and the increase of land values in Tunisia are due.

When the French troops invaded Tunis in 1880 there were neither roads nor railways, only tracks and trails. The only metalled road they found was four miles long and connected the Bey's Bardo Palace with the capital; it had been finished only the year before. The Bey Mohammed-es-Sadock had visited the Paris Exhibition in 1878, where he bought a gorgeous horse-carriage. When he took delivery of it, there was nowhere to drive it; so, he had a road made for the purpose. Now a network of over 2,000 miles of metalled roads connects the various towns and regions of the Regency and over sixteen hundred miles of broad gauge railway have been built, linking up with the Algerian system and farther on with the Moroccan railways so that it is now possible to travel by rail all the way from Gabes to Marrakesh.

At first, commercial exchange had to be carried by sea, and there were no ports. The French dug a deep canal through the Tunis lagoon giving access to ships of big tonnage to the quays of La Goulette. The eastern coast is formed of bottom reefs to a distance of several miles out to sea, making navigation in territorial waters often impossible and always difficult and dangerous: however, two clear passages allow access to the ports of Sousse and Sfax, which are among the best-equipped in the world. As for Bizerta, it is the finest harbour of North Africa, and one of the best sheltered. It is a very strong naval base, and is also well equipped as a commercial port.

After Rome destroyed Carthage the province of Africa thrived under the "Pax Romana," and it has since known many invasions: the Vandals devastated it, several successive hordes of Arabs swarmed over it with fire and sword, the French king Saint Louis died besieging Tunis in 1270, and then the Turks conquered it. Now for more than half a century the Regency has thrived under the "Pax Gallica." It is grateful that the Nazis, those modern Vandals, are being expelled before they could bring devastation to this fair land.

Condensed from the *War Illustrated.*

Tunisia : Hitler's Gamble

By LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS BROWNRIGG

THE first lesson I learn from Tunisia is the indivisibility of war. This victory will not only have psychological repercussions all over the world, but what is perhaps more important, it will have a quick practical effect many miles from the north coast of Africa.

The Mediterranean now is open to our fleets and convoys. The Far East is brought some 5,000 miles nearer to our home ports; and a very large proportion of the Royal Naval escort craft immediately becomes available to swell the protection given to our Atlantic convoys. Thus in one fell swoop, the Atlantic U-boats have their task made far more difficult and the Japanese see their enemy's lines of communication with Europe shortened by 5,000 miles.

A VICIOUS INCLINATION

The effect closer to the scene of victory, of course, is more immediate. For the second time, Hitler has gambled and lost. But we must remember that gambling is a vicious inclination and not a mere slip into a momentary temptation. Stalingrad has proved to have been no isolated mistake from which a lesson could be learnt; it has shown a tendency to take risks unwarranted by circumstances. And I detect the continuance of this tendency at the present moment in the Kuban.

We can take great comfort that we have forced the enemy into a large and sudden surrender and one for which there is little explanation unless it be that the German Generals, after Rommel had left, realized the folly of their High Command and knew that there was no purpose in continuing to fight for a regime which had so grossly let them down.

RETENTION OF A BRIDGEHEAD

I am not going to speculate on where the Allied blows will first fall in Europe, but instead I want to turn for a moment to another place which bears close resemblance to Tunis and Bizerta—the Kuban.

Here we see the Germans struggling to maintain another bridgehead and the Russians endeavouring to reduce it. I have sometimes seen the retention of such bridgeheads likened to the occupation by Wellington of the lines of Torres Vedras. But the analogy is false because Wellington had one ingredient in his strategy that the Germans have lacked in theirs. Wellington was fighting for a nation which had assured him the command of the sea at his back. Germany has never provided this advantage to her armies fighting on foreign beaches and foreshores.

Modern war has also introduced the air arm which now assists surface ships to maintain command of sea routes; and Germany has now lost command in this element. Thus we see that her armies overseas (and the Kuban is strictly speaking overseas for the Germans) have no security of regular supplies and have little chance of escape by the way they came should things go ill with them. The Kuban is, therefore, much more of a gamble than Torres Vedras.

Tunisia on the Telephone

By WING COMMANDER L. V. FRASER

BRITAIN'S Royal Signals are beating the Luftwaffe with millions of miles of wire. The Air Formation Signals never falter. As the world thrills to news from Tunisia, Britain's Royal Signals, working as men have never worked before, keep intact vital lines of communications.

Only now are secrets being revealed of the great part played by 'Signals' in the defeat of the Luftwaffe during the historic advance from El Alamein to Tunis. An advanced landing ground, for example, would be prepared perhaps in the heart of the desert miles from anywhere for Britain's mobile air striking force. Within an hour the commander would lift his telephone and receive orders from Headquarters and transmit them to the squadrons, thanks to the Royal Signals.

ALL THE WAY FROM EGYPT

To accomplish that co-ordination, the Royal Signals had snaked miles of wire over the barren desert providing essential links between squadrons' commanders and Headquarters. When the war was static, their work was simple and quiet, rarely noticed by the Allied air forces, but now when a move takes place, jolting over hundreds of miles of territory, travelling with the air forces are lorries and trucks bearing the insignia of an aircraft silhouetted in black on white and blue ground: Air Formation Signals Units, Royal Signals.

Air Formation Signals do for the air arm what the Royal Signals did—and do—for infantry and armoured divisions of the Eighth Army all the way from Egypt to Tunisia. They are among the first to reach and the last to leave in leap frogging airfields. Their mobility is as great and their co-ordination as close as that of the advanced air striking force and they are as important to the war effort as petrol stores and ammunition.

MILLIONS OF MILES OF WIRE.

At El Alamein, as the army and the air forces gathered strength to launch the attack that was to bring victory, the A.F.S. were also prepared; now they have travelled more than 2,000 miles with the army and the air forces of which every inch has been 'red.' They have laid millions of miles of wire to keep communications open in spite of enemy attack from air and from batteries of guns.

During the last three months forward fighters maintaining, their ceaseless pressure on the enemy's ground forces, have operated within range of the enemy's artillery. With them have the Air Formation Signals. They have been as much a part of the army and the air striking forces of Montgomery and Coningham as tanks, guns and aircraft. These men are specialists in air force needs and provide all communications, other than radio, from units in the field to the Headquarters. They establish signal offices, build lines, install staff, maintain teleprinters and telephone and switch-boards and provide despatch rider letter services and special despatch rider services.

To meet the expansion of air forces, they themselves have expanded and now number many thousands. They are essential to the efficient control of air operations.

Pattern for German Defeats

LONDON commentators observed that the dramatic capture of Tunis and Bizerta indicates the pattern for German defeats of the future. Forty-eight hours before, the Germans were standing on a line which had considerable natural strength. Behind them was a powerful fortress.

We had been attacking steadily for some weeks and our progress had been slow though steady. Yet our pressure had been so inexorable on land and the battle of attrition for the enemy's supplies so severe that taken together they had deprived him of essential stores, equipment and ammunition and robbed him of his capacity for resistance and shattered his morale.

After a facade of stubborn resistance and savage counter-attack, the Germans must be crumbling for days. A single powerful tank thrust at Massicault was enough to break them. Their resistance disintegrated with terrifying suddenness and completeness. Not even the powerful fortress of Bizerta could be defended. These casemates and redoubts were formidable as ever; it was the enemy who was too weak to hold them.

HARD BUT BRITTLE

It is believed in London that this pattern of defeat will be repeated again and again as the war goes on. Hard resistance will be followed by collapse without any intermediate period of slow, discernible deterioration.

No one can tell when the Germans will collapse, all one knows is that they are certain to do so but only after the toughest fighting.

Much earlier in the war, astute observer expressed the opinion that the German resistance tended to be hard—but brittle. The collapse of Tunisia vindicates this opinion.

RUNNING COMMENTARY—(*Continued from page* 7)

technical knowledge. Not the ghost of a technician has ever arrived. The same holds good of our efforts to raise sunken ships. Only the military are on the job. It may occasionally happen by accident that a technician or two comes along; in which case he invariably finds that the ropes that are being used are not long enough, the cranes are not strong enough, and so on. Consequently the sunken ships remain at the bottom of the sea. From things like this, it is fairly clear where the real problem of increased production lies."

*   *   *   *

Defeatist Talks: Straws in the Wind. The most outspoken and direct of all was Mr. HOZUMI who said, "Both in our ideas and in our conversation, there are in Japan to-day still remnants of defeatism; that is quite clear. These defeatists, seeing that in the war we still have considerable difficulties, military and economic, to contend with, are continually considering on what conditions, and at what moment, we could come to terms with the enemy. This defeatist talk of coming to terms must certainly be suppressed; and if it originates with the leaders of the Government, then for us who take our spiritual stand on the Imperial Declaration, there is nothing for it but mercilessly to contend with these leaders." Though these views are definite, we must guard ourselves against any categorical inference about serious fissures in Japan's internal policy merely from the fact of such opinions. But these published in the Japanese magazine article do throw some considerable light on Japan's home front. It is possible that the "Society for the Study of Total Warfare," under whose auspices these discussions have taken place, is only a discreet camouflage under which remnants of the old political parties still live. And these revelations can be taken as straws in the wind.

Beginning of the End

THE Allied victory in Tunisia has profoundly impressed the world. In Germany there has been a return to sombreness of the so-called Stalingrad mood.

The original Afrika Korps was as martial and expert a body of soldiers as the German army ever had; it was given the task which held the key to world conquest; in Rommel it had a legendary leader. The task has ended in catastrope. The Korps is to-day in dissolution. The leader is in eclipse. It was only in December that the Germans were being comfortingly told: "The world importance of Tunisia to-day is greater than ever—and Tunisia is in our hands." They may have forgotten the boast—there have been many to forget—but the impression of the value which the High Command put on Tunisia will not have been easily erased.

It will be surprising if Tunisia does not weaken the German people's confidence in the Army's capacity to avert defeat.

FED ON FANCY AND FRAUD BY FASCISTS.

In Italy the effect is likely to hasten still more the process of disillusionment which had already gone far. Since June 1942, Italy has been fed on fancy and fraud by her Fascists. The news from Tunisia where so many of her best troops have been sacrificed has its plain meaning: the dream of *Mare Nostrum* has ended.

Hardly less decisive is the impression that it will make on such countries as remain outside the war. In the Mediterranean area victory will be nowhere more heartily acclaimed nor its implications more closely assessed than in Turkey whose statesmen and people have shown steady faith and friendship in the darkest days. In the oppressed lands where hope often has been disappointed but faith has never faltered, Tunisia will be accepted as a sure herald of greater victory and deliverance.

France in an especial sense rejoices. It was on the day of Joan of Arc that French Tunis and French Bizerta were restored and the soldiers of France played a gallant part in breaking enemy resistance.

DAYS OF BRIGHT PROMISE

For this country and the Commonwealth, these days of achievement are also days of bright promise. It was three years ago that the enemy launched his triumphant assault on the Low Countries—an assault which ended in the capitulation of the French and in Dunkirk for us. The debt of Dunkirk is being repaid. In no spirit of arrogance but with "an humble and a contrite heart" do the King and the people recall Dunkirk.

The decision then taken was an act of faith and Tunisia is its abundant justification. From being militarily alone and sustained only by hopes of the free everywhere, Britain and the Commonwealth now march with their allies, whose own strength combined with that of Britain and the Commonwealth is a guarantee that the final victory is certain.

The confident ring of messages which Marshal Stalin, speaking for a people who have borne much and achieved greatly, has sent to President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill is unmistakable. General Smuts, recalling Mr. Churchill's description of El Alamein as the "end of the beginning" speaks of Tunis and Bizerta as marking "the beginning of the end." The resources of the United States, Russia and the British Commonwealth have now been mobilized and marshalled into a force which must prevail over the enemy.

—*The Times.*

End of a Dream

THREE years ago, Hitler fell on the Low Countries en route to his rapid conquest of Western Europe. In his order of the day heralding that catastrophic event, he said: "The fight which begins to-day will decide the destiny of the German people for a thousand years."

The Allied victory of Tunisia marks the end of his bombastic dream. General Alexander's blitzkrieg, though on a smaller scale, has as deep a significance as the German blitzkrieg of 1940. In a purely military sense, it is an achievement which Axis spokesmen seek in vain to explain away to a sceptical world.

Not only has the enemy generalship been outwitted, not only has inter-Allied co-operation among all arms been of a high order of technical efficiency, but the assembling in the battle zone of a vast concentration of armed forces across many hundreds of miles—frequently thousands of miles—of dangerous sea is an impressive demonstration of Allied might.

That the actual loss of some 200,000 picked men with all their armament will be a serious enough loss to Germany's military prestige is obvious. Of much greater moment are the strategic consequences. The effect on the general shipping position will be seen and felt almost at once.

—*The News Chronicle.*

A Round Total, or Global Raspberry.

I said 1921–24

Our fathers fought in trench and shattered wood
That all the world might evermore have peace
And temples stand where fort and bastion stood
And tyrants in decay their bragging cease.
I thought that all was well and all was new.

They said 'Sez you.'

Thou saidst 1925–28

(Great prophet of an unborn nobler age,
That sawest from the mud arise the tree)
Too long has man been plaything of the rage
Of foolish devils, greedier than the sea ;
Now we shall bid the bad old ways Adieu.

They said 'Sez you.'

He said 1929–32

Our nation has a mission to expand ;
We tread the lesser breeds beneath our heel.
Hail me divine and raise an answering hand
To grasp the bomb and rain down showers of steel.
We will throughout the world erase the Jew.

They said 'Sez you.'

We said 1933–36

The troubles of tempestuous years enough
Have made umbrella dear and dear fireside.
Dictators rave but we will call the bluff
And they will surely run away and hide :
They talk space but little can they do.

They said 'Sez you.'

You said 1937–40

Beware ! The hastening time brooks no delay ;
Your ploughshares beat to swords, your wings gird on.
Now is the fœ upon you, bent to slay.
(And as you spurred us, so the day was won.)
But owing all, so many to so few.

We said 'Sez you.'

They said 1940–?

We are the Master-Folk ; we will disrobe
The shrinking earth with iron-sheathed paws ;
We will despoil and ravish all the globe,
Brutality and lust our only laws.
For God has made us great and sweet and true.

We said 'Sez you.'

—*R.G.*

In the Wake of the Eighth Army

By J. B. PRIESTLEY

THE Battle of Egypt was a beautiful job. There was nothing haphazard and lucky about it. The campaign was exquisitely planned, timed, and executed. When those two formidable men, Generals Alexander and Montgomery, arrived in Egypt, Rommel was doomed. On October the third Rommel was in Berlin, which was busy creating a kind of Teutonic myth of invincibility around him; and the Field-Marshal, who appears to have taken to this dangerous adulation as a cat takes to cream, loudly boasted to the Berliners and to the world in these terms: "We hold the gateway of Egypt with the full intention to act. We did not go there with any intention of being flung back sooner or later. You may rely on our holding fast to what we have got."

Exactly a month later he and his army were in full retreat, and he lost seventy-five thousand men, over five hundred tanks, and a thousand guns. He was completely out-generalled and out-fought. I have no need to go into details in describing this Battle of Egypt because you have probably read them before.

But there are one or two points I would like to make about it. The two armies faced each other along a forty-mile front from El Alamein, a front that could not be widened because it had the sea at one end of it and the great Quattara Depression at the other. So there could not be any outflanking movements, which up to that time had been the favourite manœuvre in this desert warfare. If the Eighth Army attacked, it had to attack head-on.

THE TRAP IN THE CENTRE

Rommel knew it was preparing to attack him. But he thought it would attack him in the central section, which he'd baited like a trap, keeping his powerful armoured forces at each side of the trap ready to pinch off our armour if it got through. But the Eighth Army refused this trap. It attacked in the north, against the very strongest part of the line. And not only that: it made the attack in quite an unexpected fashion, breaking all the new rules. Instead of following the German fashion of attacking with the armour first and the infantry afterwards, Alexander and Montgomery neatly reversed the process. They returned, in fact, with some necessary variations, to the methods of the last war, and I must say that as an old and very undistinguished soldier of that war my heart warmed when I heard and read what they were up to.

On that northern sector, along a front of six miles, the Eighth Army had a gun every twenty-three yards, and on the night of October 23 all those guns suddenly opened up and blasted Rommel's defences. Then the infantry—bless their hearts—went forward, clean through Rommel's advanced minefields; went on widening and deepening this first salient, while the Axis air force was driven out of the skies, bombed and destroyed on the ground, and all the lines of communication were plastered.

And now the Eighth Army sappers, who deserve a special medal, followed the infantry, clearing the minefields—a very delicate and dangerous job. This had to be done to make a safe gap for the armour to go through. Our Tenth Corps, a heavily armoured corps, had been encamped for training well behind the battle front. Apparently it was still there while the battle was raging. But what Rommel's observers actually saw was a dummy camp, and the Tenth Corps had been stealthily moved up the line. The gap was cleared, and then the Tenth Corps went through like a thunderbolt. The Axis army was split in two. All those south of the break-through were doomed, for all their lines of supply had been cut. Those in the north could only retreat at full speed along the coast road and railway, and so began one of the longest chases in military history.

And now the tough, grim Eighth Army, having performed miracles of supply organization, has rolled through all Libya, Cyrenaica and Tripolitania, mopping up the last vestiges of Mussolini's empire.

Whatever this Eighth Army does, it seems to do solidly and well. Take, for example, its occupation of Tripolitania, which was to Italy what Algeria was to France—its most favoured overseas possession. Now, almost as soon as the Eighth Army entered Tripolitania a British military government was set up to administer the territory until the end of the war or such time as decisions are taken about the future of the Italian Empire. We had learned something from our experience in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. So certain were our military leaders that Tripolitania would soon be captured that more than eighty officers of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration were already trained to take over Tripolitania, and these officers went with Brigadier Lush, the Deputy Chief Political Officer, into Tripoli. Actually, Brigadier Lush, who administers the province under the orders of the Army Commander, was at General Montgomery's side when he received the formal surrender of Tripoli from the Italian officials. All our officers of the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration had been specially trained in the geography and history of Tripolitania, its system of government, its agricultural and mineral resources, and so forth: they knew exactly what they were taking over. The result was that the change-over to British military administration took place smoothly and rapidly, without a hitch. The same cool organizing skill had gone into this job that had gone before into the job of chasing Rommel across Africa.

THEY'RE HARD MEN.

There's no nonsense about this Eighth Army, as the German General Staff would be the first to admit. "I was told," said the captured commander of the Afrika Korps, General von Thoma, to General Montgomery, "that you are a hard man." And he was told right. There are some hard men in the Eighth Army, from the shrewd calculating general officers down to the desert-toughened veteran infantrymen and sappers. We are an easy-going people, we British, and most of us only want to mess about at home and not interfere with anybody; and even after years of having charges of degeneracy and decadence and other insults screamed at us by neurotic Germans and strutting Italians, all kinds of cheap gangsters in peacock uniforms, we didn't mind very much and still took it easy. But anybody who finally drags us away from home, compels us to organize and toughen ourselves, will regret it sooner or later. The very Germans and Italians who before this war were loudest in their sneers at our degenerate democracy are now even going the length of holding up the British people as an example to their own people.

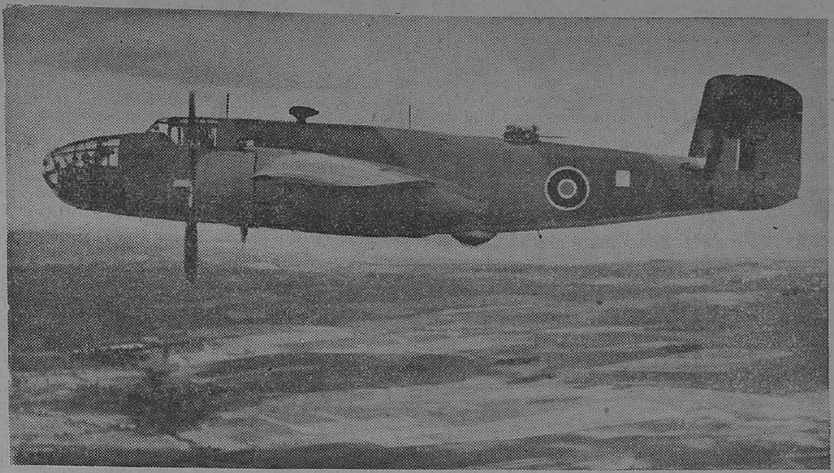
But let us return to the Eighth Army and Tripolitania. We are told that the basic note of our administration there will be to carry on the civil life of the country in so far as it does not clash with military needs. Towards the estimated 40,000 Italians remaining out of the pre-war population of about 90,000, the British administration will adopt a firm but just attitude. Lists of 'war crimes,' such as sabotage, the destruction of communications, and so forth, have been posted up, and these offences will be tried by British military courts. And there are military guards on all the public utilities in the various centres. Fascist leaders and prominent members of the Fascist party have been interned. Fascist clubs, cultural centres, and similar institutions have been closed. The display of Fascist emblems and flags is forbidden, as well as the wearing of Fascist uniforms. Fascist funds in banks will be permanently frozen and those in private hands taken into safe custody. Otherwise, life in Tripolitania will be allowed to go on much as in normal times.

FASCISM BEING DESTROYED

These administrative moves seem to me just as efficient and sensible as the Eighth Army's campaign against Rommel. They have, indeed, something of the same decisive and clear-sighted quality. What we are destroying in Tripolitania is not the Italian national life there, for we have nothing against the Italian national life and character, and, indeed, rather like them. No, what is being destroyed, root and branch, in Tripolitania is Fascism. And quite right, too. The Eighth Army, like all our armed forces, exists to fight Fascism—to hit it hard, to break it into little pieces, and then to blow it out of this world.

We don't want to persecute the Italians because they are Italians. There's nothing wrong with them just because they are Italians. But we won't have their Fascism. Sooner or later—and I for one don't give them very long—the Duce and all his black-shirted and black-hearted gang will have to go. We patiently endured their swaggering nonsense and intrigues and treachery for years, but now they and all their system are headed for the ashcan. And I am certain that the ordinary decent fellow of our democracies, who may be rolling on with the Eighth Army or helping to make the tanks and planes and guns it uses, takes this clear and sensible line. He isn't fighting against nations as nations; isn't fighting for one coloured flag against another. He's fighting Fascism and is ready to fight it anywhere and everywhere, whether it wears black shirts or brown shirts or no shirt at all.

For wherever it exists, Fascism talks the same stuff, makes the same gestures, and is up to the same old tricks, if only because the people who create it belong



NORTH AMERICAN MITCHELL *RECONNAISSANCE BOMBERS HAVE GIVEN EXCELLENT SERVICES IN THE MIDDLE EAST.—This famous machine which bombed Tokyo is called the B-25 by the United States Army. It carries a crew of five, is well armed, has a maximum speed of around* 280 m.p.h. *and carries a bomb load of some* 2,000 *lb. Photo showsa side view of the* Mitchell.

to the same psychological types. They are all unscrupulous power-seekers ready to hoodwink and then bully the people, contemptuous of the common decent man. That is why I believe that wherever Fascism shows its wicked long nose we should hit that nose and hit it hard. So far as Fascists are concerned, no matter under what disguise they may appear or how smoothly they may talk, I believe we ought to be very tough and hard. They're rats, and always will be rats. We want to have done with them once and for all, in every part of the world. As soon as people begin talking this poisonous Fascist stuff we ought to tell them to shut up or take the consequences, and show their audiences a few films of the Nazis dying like flies in the snow outside Stalingrad or the masses of betrayed and abandoned Italian soldiers streaming in from the desert to surrender to the Eighth Army.

OUR TASK

It's about time we announced at the tops of our voices that having long lost our patience we propose in the immediate future to blow all that remains of Fascism, in every form, clean off the face of the earth. I don't mean we should start swaggering. We can leave the swaggering to the Fascists, who have spent years at it, though we haven't noticed much of it coming from them lately. But we should make it absolutely clear to the whole world, beyond any possible shadow of doubt, that we have said good-bye to our easy-going life, have poured into recruiting offices and camps and war factories, have armed and toughened ourselves, have sweated and toiled and, here at least, stood up to the worst Goering could devise; not for the fun of it, but to fight Fascism, to rip the silly shirt off its back, to throw its uniforms and emblems of treachery and murder into the nearest furnace, to silence its bullying and lying speeches for ever, to release all decent ordinary folk from its octopus clutch. That's our task, and we should tackle it in the same spirit and with the same grim purpose as the Eighth Army.

—*From a B.B.C. talk.*

British Transport at War

By THE RT. HON. LORD LEATHERS, *C.H., Minister of War Transport*

THE other day I was telling an American friend about the heavy demands that war had made on our transport system, how those demands had been met, and how we were planning to meet the extra demands that were still coming in. He said it looked as if we had learnt to put a quart into a pint pot.

Unfortunately we have not discovered that secret any more than we have found the secret of perpetual motion. The capacity of our transport system, like that of a pot, has its limits, and if the flow of arms and men fills the transport pot to the brim all we can do is either to increase the size of pot or to cut down passenger services, to pack buses and trains more tightly and to carry only those things which *must* be carried. And, broadly speaking, we are doing both these things.

Perhaps some of you knew this country before the war. If so, you may recall the many tempting invitations to travel—sightseeing tours, luxury cruises, cheap trips to the seaside, and the Continental boat train with its long row of Pullman cars. You may even concede that Britain in those days had the most frequent passenger services in the world.

I don't think that would be true to-day, for passenger train services have been cut by thirty per cent, and the special streamlined engines, which used to haul express passenger trains at average speeds of seventy miles an hour from start to finish, are now often to be found pulling trainloads of tanks and guns, coal and minerals.

Nor would you find any inducement to travel. Quite the contrary. Instead of the holiday poster advertising the attractions of this historic city or the bracing air of that seaside town, you would be confronted everywhere with the challenging question printed in bold letters: "Is your journey really necessary?"

TWO-THIRDS OF THE PASSENGERS ARE TROOPS

In these circumstances you can imagine what travel conditions are like. If you came over here you would find that two-thirds of the passengers on long-distance trains were troops in uniform. You would be unable to book a seat. You would be wise to turn up at the station half-an-hour before the train was due to go. This is because our long-distance trains to-day are carrying twice as many passengers as before the war. Moreover, you would have to take your own sandwiches with you because of the seven hundred restaurant and buffet cars that were running pre-war all but seventy have been taken off. So, too, have many of the sleeping-cars. All this has been done so that each train can carry the maximum number of passengers.

At night all the windows of the trains are blacked-out, the coach and station lights are dim. Even by day the trains are not immune from enemy attack; particularly near the South or East coast a sneak raider may come out of the clouds and machine-gun the locomotive and passenger coaches.

Here let me say a word about our locomotive crews. Since the air raids on this country began, scores of passenger and freight trains have been machine-gunned while travelling at speed. In many instances, the driver or fireman has been hit—sometimes fatally. It is, therefore,

a remarkable fact—and one which I am proud to put on record—that in no instance has an attack of this sort resulted in an accident to the train. No matter how persistent the enemy has been, the loco crews have never allowed their attention to waver from their primary duty of getting their trains through safely, and even when badly wounded they have always retained their presence of mind and sufficient strength to apply the regulator and bring the train to a stop.

One of our passenger trains has been machine-gunned with such regularity on Saturday afternoons that we suspect the enemy lies in wait for it. But it is still running and still carrying a full complement of passengers.

NOT ONE EXTRA TRAIN FOR HOLIDAYMAKERS

Christmas has come and gone. It is a time when, as at Easter, Whitsun and on August Bank Holiday, we normally try to join our families and that usually means travelling. In peace, very many extra passenger trains are run at these holiday times; in war, not one extra train is put on and people stay where they are. Everyone understands it and accepts it. Extra passenger trains would interfere with the movement of essential freight.

On the roads you would find similar conditions except that, in order to save rubber and petrol, we have diverted much road passenger traffic to the railways—in fact, a thousand extra workers' trains are now running every day. We have taken off the roads most of our long-distance coaches and transferred them to local services taking people to and from their places of work or to provide 'feeders' for the railways. In every town in the morning and evening people queue up for buses.

At the beginning of this winter I had to warn the travelling public to prepare for yet sterner meaures. The winter is our testing time. Apart from weather conditions there is a general slowing down of traffic owing to the blackout. That is particularly true in the railway marshalling yards where men, sorting wagons in the dark, can only work at about two-thirds of their ordinary speed.

I told the public just how we stood. I had to provide at least two hundred additional freight trains a day to meet our expanding production programme. I had to find locomotives and rollingstock for the American troops then beginning to arrive in large numbers in this country —and incidentally I am glad to tell you that the first American main line locomotives are now beginning to arrive, and very welcome they are I had to save petrol and rubber. That is why fewer buses are available during the winter.

NO BUSES AFTER NINE AT NIGHT

In imposing these new restrictions I knew—and the public knew—that they were bound to bear hardly on old-established habits. In normal times we move about a good deal in this country. We depend on frequent visits to neighbouring towns for our shopping, for our amusements, and for visits to friends and relations. Our habits were largely based on cheap travelling facilities, which I have had to withdraw, and on a plentiful supply of buses which are now withdrawn altogether at nine o'clock at night in most towns. To-day we are becoming more localized, but we are settling down, working harder and travelling less.

In another way, too, the need to save transport for the war effort has affected our daily live. Shop delivery services have been drastically cut down, and by carrying her shopping home the British housewife has helped us to save ten million gallons of petrol a year as well as a good deal of man-power. Moreover, if she lives in London she can no longer expect to buy biscuits made in Scotland or cocoa made in the North Country. To save transport, markets are supplied from the nearest factory or the nearest port, and this, you can imagine, has changed many household habits.

And, finally, I come to the place where all our transport problems start—the sea. Because we are a small island, with more than 40,000,000 mouths to feed, we have grown to depend for our life and our ways of life on what the sea brings and on what it takes away. In peace, our merchant ships bring us sixty per cent of the food we consume. In war, by growing more and importing less, the position has been rougly reversed. We have had to reserve shipping space for all the instruments of war. We carry dried fruit instead of fresh fruit to save the weight of water; we carry orange juice instead of the oranges so as to pack as much vitamin C as possible into each ship; we cut everything to the bone, except beef, where it is the bone that gets left behind.

I must say a word about our transport workers. It is not generally realised that a high proportion of the two million or so people working in transport are over fighting age. The railways, for instance, have sent over 100,000 men to the Forces and have replaced them with women and with men recalled from retirement.

SIXTEEN THOUSAND MERCHANT SEAMEN DEAD

Of one thing I am certain. Our merchant seamen have the whole-hearted support of all workers. At sea, the dangers and rigours of the sailor's life call for great courage and endurance and our losses have been heavy, amounting to over 16,000 lives; on land, long hours and difficult conditions have called for everything that the men and women of transport have to give, for they know how intimate a part they are playing in securing victory on the battlefronts.

The picture which I have tried to paint for you is a picture of transport in the fourth year of war as the passenger sees it. There is another side of which he sees very little—the vast movement of traffic to and from the factories; the 20,000 goods trains which are run every week; the sturdy coastal ships which every year make 25,000 voyages round our shores; the long-distance lorries driving through the night with loads of food and war equipment; and the 6,000 boats and barges carrying essential traffic on our canals and waterways.

The passenger knows all this, though he cannot see it. And he accepts the discomforts of travel because he recognizes that in war the first problem is to get the men and their weapons as quickly as possible to the point where they are needed. When you do that, you have won half the battle.

—Broadcast in the B.B.C. Pacific and North American Services.

The Other Battle of the Atlantic

By DOUGLAS WILLIS

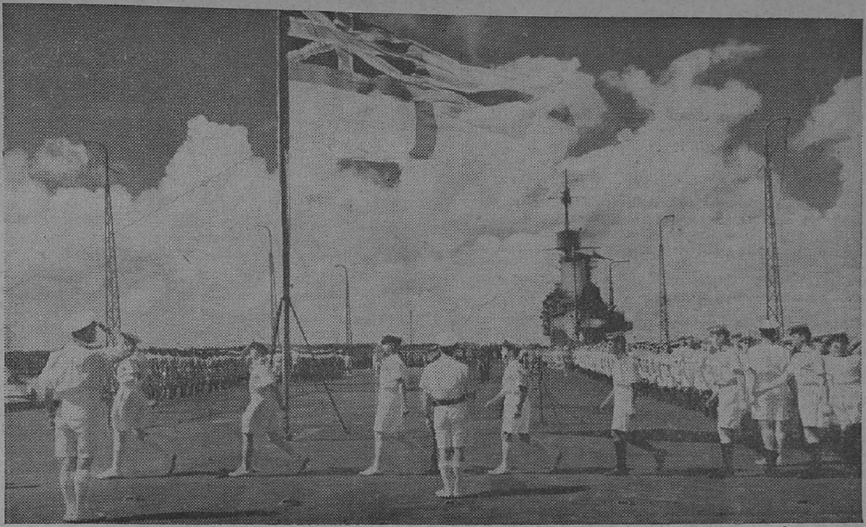
A Battle of the Atlantic has been going on for centuries and it will go on for centuries more says Mr. Douglas Willis., in the following article from " London Calling " *[Mr. Douglas joined the Merchant Navy shortly after the outbreak of war. He describes what happened to his ship—an oil tanker in convoy—when she ran into a very heavy Atlantic storm.]*

WE left this country with a large convoy of merchant ships a few weeks ago. For seven days the weather was as near perfect as doesn't matter. But on the seventh day the wind had freshened. The swell had increased and the ship was nosing up and down a bit. A spatter of spray was coming over the well-deck now and again. What was left of the old moon was cruising drunkenly across the sky. Long, ragged wisps of cloud, torn and frayed, were banking together in a solid mass ahead. The air was cold and crisp, and the wind slashed through the two sweaters and oilskin I was wearing and came out the other side.

By the end of watch the sea was working up to a full fury. The wind had increased to gale force and the ship was lurching uncomfortably. From the galley came the brisk tinkle of pots and pans chasing each other across the shelves.

EVERY SHIP FOR HERSELF

When I came on deck in the morning—much against my better instincts—the weather had really taken a turn for the worse. The deck was heeling over at forty-five degrees, first in one direction, then the other. The sea was tearing past deck high, like an express train. The waves were black as night and flecked and scarred and seared with foam, the tops lashed and shredded by an eighty-mile-an-hour wind. The engines were at half speed, just enough to keep the nose of the ship into the sea. The ships around us had shrunk to four or five, half-hidden in the mist and disappearing from sight with each lurch of the ship as we or they dived behind the barrier of rolling sea. The convoy and the war were forgotten. It was now a case of every ship for herself. The wind and the sea were out for our blood, and were doing their best to get it.



SUNDAY DIVISIONS ON BOARD A BRITISH AIRCRAFT CARRIER.—At Sunday Divisions in the British Navy the Captain inspects the ship's company. Sometimes the inspection takes the form of a "Muster by open list," which means that the ship's company fall in and file past the Captain according to their number on the ship's books.

A Division led by their Divisional Officer, marching past Captain R.L.B. Cunliffe, R.N. Commanding Officer of the aircraft carrier, during Sunday Divisions.

The barometer was still falling. Everything that might break adrift was lashed down. The lifeboats, which had been swung out in readiness for an emergency exit, were hauled inboard. Every steel door leading on to the decks was locked, barred, and bolted. Stormguards over the port-holes were clamped down, and the ship stood prepared for the siege.

And the sea was still rising. The propeller, rising clean out of the water with every pitch of the ship, was grinding and tearing into nothing more solid than fresh air. It sent a shudder through the whole ship, straining and shaking the already over-worked engines. We were making no progress at all. The log line, which should have been stretched taut from the stern of the ship, curved in a loose bight to lee'ard and eventually broke away altogether.

Time was beginning to lose any importance it might have had. Watch followed watch and still the weather did not improve. It got worse and worse. All the elements in the world were being gathered together, heaped up, and slung at us. The ship was doing everything but break in two.

WILDERNESS OF GREY SKY AND WATER

The convoy had long since broken up. We were all alone in a wilderness of grey sky and water. But there were still a few shafts of light in the gloom. They came from the fly-bridge, the seventy-yard-long gangway running from amidships to aft at a height of about ten feet from the deck. Our ship is an oil tanker and these fly-bridges are standard on tankers owing to the deck itself being so near the waterline. When the ship is loaded, this deck is awash most of the time. Along the fly-bridge must come the engineers to the engine-room and the stewards to the galley for the officers' meals. They've also to get back again, and in rough weather it is a journey not lightly undertaken.

From a sheltered corner of the poop deck we would wait and watch for the fun. There was always a crowd for the Chief Steward, most hated man on any ship. A satisfied chuckle would go up as we saw him pop a doubtful head out of his doorway, then step out and brace himself against an eighty-mile-an-hour wind.

Bowing his head against the spray, he pulls himself to the gangway. He is still in the dry, protected by the bulk of the bridge behind him. He pauses a moment, eyeing the mountain of sea and spray that is breaking over the well-deck and fly-bridge right in front of him. He waits for the ship to roll away from the weather-side, then he's off! He starts at a gallop and gets a dozen yards; then the ship starts to roll back again. The sea is bunched up alongside fifty feet high, all ready to pounce. What is he going to do? He does it. He scuttles back again, only to find that the wave didn't break after all. But wait! He's off again—this time determined to do or die!

He covers the first twenty yards at full speed. Then there's a lurch—he's flung to the other side and grabs hold with both hands. He recovers, realises his danger, and staggers on. Now the wind has got him, is spinning him round, forcing him against the rail. He pulls himself along, holding on with his teeth. The ship rolls again, he lets go with one hand and the wind catces him in the pants and bowls him along like a ninepin. Then—whoo! —down goes the nose of the ship, up goes the stern and he finds he's plodding up-hill. But he's nearly there. A bit damp may be, but nearly there. But watch! The ship is rolling over again on the beam, right over, right over in the path of that raging sea . . . and it's got him! Yes, it's got him! The whole deck disappears beneath a roaring mass of water. It zooms up and crashes over the fly-bridge—and the steward. We can see him for a second then he disappears from view. He's hanging on now with everything he's got. In a second he's back in sight again, a bedraggled scarecrow, soaked through and lashed by an icy wind. He can't get any wetter so he stands and tells the sea what he thinks of it. His curses and threats are picked up by the wind and flung back at him. We can't hear him. We can just see him waving his fist and can guess the rest.

BALING ALL DAY LONG

But the steward was only one of many. We all had our turn at one time or another. The weather was so bad now that food could no longer travel the fly-bridge and cold meat and cheese was the order of the day amidships. The engineers were sleeping in the gunners' messroom aft. The gunners were baling out the messroom all day long as the waves were now breaking over the poop deck and had smashed the steel door of the messroom off its hinges. Everybody was eating standing up, out of a mess tin, as the plates wouldn't stay on the tables.

Down below in the sleeping accommodation, things weren't much rosier. Two doorways opened out on to the deck and these couldn't be shut as they were the only means of ventilation and exit. The seas were breaking over the stern, pouring hundreds of gallons of water through these two doorways and cascading down the companionways into the alleyways and rooms below. We had half the Atlantic Ocean in, and then we threw it out again.

The ship was taking a terrible pounding. Snow was now falling and the ship was sheathed in inches of ice. Then, one night, the man at the wheel found the helm wasn't answering. As the ship drifted broadside on to the sea and took the full force of the hurricane wind

on her beam, the third mate fought his way along the fly bridge to the steel-walled room aft where the steering machinery was housed. Or, at least, it *had* been steering machinery. Now it was scrap. The strain of battling with cross-currents, pounding seas, and the savage pull of the swinging ship had been too much. Steel shafts, a foot thick, had broken clean across, had torn themselves from their mountings. Gear which had chugged into motion, turning the giant rudder as the helmsman moved the wheel, was now still and silent—a battered wreck. The ship was no longer under control.

We now wallowed helplessly, rolling drunkenly until the edges of the decks disappeared beneath the waves. Then down again into the trough as the seas came smashing over with hammer blows. Water was pouring in down the open companionways, flooding the accommodation with a frothing torrent a foot deep. The steel doors to the deck were slammed to and clapped down.

The skipper decided to let the ship drift until morning. Emergency steering gear would have to be rigged on the deck above—but not on a pitch-dark night with the decks under water and lashed by an eighty-mile-an-hour wind.

TWO RED LIGHTS

High up on the foremast two red lights suddenly shone —warning to navigation and to any ships of the convoy within radius that we had broken down. Also, a sure fire target for any lurking submarine. The chance had to be taken that, if there were any U-boats about, they were in as much trouble as we were.

That night was a dirty night and a lousy time was had by all. The skipper, who had hardly left the bridge since the beginning of the trip, stayed there all night. To see him ashore, in a battered trilby and a raincoat, you would think he was a local grocer or a fried-fish salesman, but on the bridge that night he was a hero.

The next morning, with daylight, the emergency steering gear was rigged. Two steel wire cables, one for port and one for starboard, were wound round the winch. These ran through pulleys down below and connected direct with the rudder quadrant. Our chance of paying off rested on these cables holding.

The steering now had to be done from the winch—a steam-driven piece of machinery normally used for heaving on the ropes which bring the ship alongside a wharf. As the man working at the winch was facing the stern of the ship and, anyway, had the whole bulk of the poop deck and the bridge accommodation between himself and the direction in which we were supposed to be going, new methods had to be created. The officer of the watch stood on the bridge behind the useless wheel and telephoned his instructions to the platform of the anti-aircraft gun aft. There a half-frozen gunner or seaman relayed the directions with the aid of a megaphone to the man at the winch.

Some idea of the roar of the wind and the general hullabaloo created by the weather can be gauged from the fact that the distance between the man on the gun platform and the man at the winch was hardly twelve feet, yet there were times when the man bawling through the megaphone could not make himself heard. It was a freezing job, sitting on a soap box with the telephone clamped to your ear, and the snow and sleet trickling down the back of your neck with oilskins frozen solid like a board so that you could hardly move.

There were many anxious moments during the next couple of days. It was touch and go whether the very slender cables would hold, but they did, and ever so gradually the weather began to improve. The mighty blast of the wind dropped to a keen icy breeze, the roar and swell of the sea faded to nothing much more than a murmur and once more the engines picked up a long, regular beat that sent us swishing through the water at a steady twelve knots.

With this Heath Robinson steering gear we travelled over 1,300 miles. Then, after nineteen days at sea, and twelve days of battering, we sighted the welcome lights of Halifax, Nova Scotia. No bands played as we limped into the harbour and dropped anchor outside the boom.

There is nothing unusual in all this. It has been going on for centuries. It will go on for centuries more. It is happening now . . .

—A talk broadcast in the B.B.C.'s Eastern Service.

WAR DIARY

BRITAIN AND GERMANY

19TH MAY.—A few Axis aircraft crossed the south-east coast of England. One enemy plane was destroyed.

As a result of the bombing of the Mohne and Eder dams, 54 towns in Germany were inundated and 50,000 families were rendered homeless. The Berlin press demanded reprisals against the Jews "proportionate with the very great damage caused by the attack".

It was reported earlier that information concerning the dams was given to British authorities by an eminent Jewish refugee in Britain.

The Royal Air Force made a widespread offensive against occupied France. Fifteen enemy planes were shot down.

United States bombers attacked Meaulte and Saint Omar in France, Kiel, Emden and other objectives in north-west Germany, Velsen in Holland and Antwerp in Belgium. One-hundred and twenty-one Axis aircraft were shot down.

20TH MAY.—Aircraft of the Fighter Command attacked enemy airfields in northern France and railways and canal communications in France and Belgium. Targets in Berlin also were attacked.

United States aircraft attacked shipbuilding and submarine yards at Kiel and Flensburg in Germany.

21ST MAY.—United States heavy bombers attacked the submarine pens at Wilhelmshaven and Emden.

Fighter Command aircraft damaged locomotives near Essen and Bremen.

Sir Archibald Sinclair, Minister for Air, said: "We must not relax following the victory in North Africa. We shall pursue the enemy from North Africa in o Europe and the Royal Air Force will continue to hammer him. When the time comes, we will advance on our enemies and take them by the throat in their own land."

22ND MAY.—Aircraft of the Bomber Command attacked railway targets at Orleans, laid mines in enemy waters and bombed Berlin. An enemy convoy off the French coast was also attacked.

American planes attacked submarine construction yards at Wilhelmshaven and Emden.

23RD MAY.—General Catroux arrived in London from Algiers and conferred with General de Gaulle.

24TH MAY.—Aircraft of the Bomber Command attacked Dortmund. The strong defences of the Ruhr were beaten down and over 2,000 tons of bombs were dropped. The number of planes engaged in the raid exceeded 500.

[Dortmund which has a population of 550,000 is one of the chief centres of heavy industry in Germany.]

Three of the eight E-boats which the Fleet Air Arm attacked off the Isle of Wight were sunk.

25TH MAY.—Three German planes were shot down during an attack on a town on the English coast.

The Royal Air Force attacked an enemy convoy off the Dutch coast. One merchant vessel was sunk.

The House of Commons granted the Government a new vote of credit for 1,000 million sterling for war purposes. Sir Kingsley Wood, Chancellor of the Exchequer, stated that the war expenditure had risen to about 14 million daily.

26TH MAY.—The Royal Air Force raided Dusseldorf. Over five 4,000 pound bombs were dropped. The Royal Air Force also attacked an enemy airfield at Abbeville.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND ATLANTIC

19TH MAY.—Addressing a joint session of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives at Washington, Mr. Churchill reviewed the progress of the global war. He said: "Immediate and effective help to China is one of the most urgent and important aims of our common task." . . . "While the defeat of Japan will not mean the defeat of Germany, the defeat of Germany will mean infallibly the ruin of Japan." . . . "We must do what lies in our power to take more of the weight off Russia in 1943. How and when cannot be foreseen, still less foretold."

20TH MAY.—Mr. Cordell Hull, United States Secretary of State, and Mr. Wei Tao Ming, Chinese Ambassador, signed documents ratifying the treaty relinquishing United States extra territorial rights in China.

21ST MAY.—Mr. E. R. Stettinius, Lease-Lend Administrator, disclosed that through the month of February, the amount of Lease-Lend Cargo that had been lost through sinking was under 5 per cent.

22ND MAY.—Mr. Churchill told the staff of the British Embassy at Washington that there was no reason not to expect a long war.

According to Raymond Clapper from Stockholm, well-informed persons in Sweden were of the opinion that Germany's staying power would last exactly for one more year, not beyond.

A decisive stage was reached in the Anglo-American strategy talks. Increasing aid to China (which implied a campaign in Burma after the rains) was evidently in the forefront of the Allies Pacific programme. It was also suggested a second front may be opened in Norway.

24TH MAY.—A forecast of the announcement of the Churchill-Roosevelt talks stated that Germany would be target number one, but how and when the Allies would hit the Continent by land would not be disclosed in advance.

Dr. Benes, President of Czechoslovakia, addressing the Chicago University, said that Italy would come out of the war when the Mediterranean offensive developed sufficiently. "I expect a military and political disaster will come in Japan very soon."

26TH MAY.—More than 150 newspapermen attended the Press Conference held by Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt. Mr. Churchill announced that the tide of war had turned and that war in the Pacific would be prosecuted with the greatest vigour.

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INDIA, BURMA AND CEYLON

19TH MAY.—In the Buthidaung area, an attack was made on 50 enemy motor vehicles. Objectives were bombed at Toungoo.

21ST MAY.—The Royal Air Force attacked enemy objectives at Letpan and Kymegn. A Japanese fortified stockade near Yazagyo was bombed. Heavy attacks on Japanese supply lines in Central Burma were carried out.

22ND MAY.—The Royal Air Force made a low-level attack on Indaw airfield and machine-gunned Japanese positions on the Upper Chindwin. A bridge on the Akyab island was bombed and Japanese troops in the Buthidaung area was attacked.

A force of Japanese fighters was engaged near Cox's Bazaar by the Royal Air Force. One enemy plane was destroyed and others damaged.

United States Air Force bombers attacked Japanese workshops at Chank.

23RD MAY.—The Royal Air Force destroyed or damaged 20 Japanese bombers, escorted by 11 fighters, which attacked Chittagong airfield. Locomotives, Japanese troops and other objectives were machine-gunned in Katha district. An enemy launch was damaged on the Chindwin river. Six Japanese power launches were destroyed off Ramree island.

According to Squadron-Leader Ravindar Singh, I.A.F. (now in Durban), the Japanese threat to India no longer existed as a factor worth worrying about. "We won't let them get any further in Burma."

24TH MAY.—The Royal Air Force attacked railway objectives at Ye-u. Targets in Akyab island were also attacked. Bombs were dropped on enemy-occupied villages in Central Burma. Enemy vessels were attacked in the Gulf of Martaban. Railway installations and warehouses were also attacked in Kanbalu.

25TH MAY.—The Royal Air Force made three attacks on Japanese troops at Udaung. An enemy-occupied village near Buthidaung was also attacked. United States aircraft raided Monywa, Thazi and enemy barracks in Upper Burma.

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ITALY, AFRICA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

19TH MAY.—Captain Balfour, Under Secretary for Air, stated in the House of Commons that there was no assurance or agreement of any kind whatever that Rome should not be bombed.

The Royal Air Force dropped leaflets over Rome.

It was reported that German officials were being withdrawn from Italy, leaving Mussolini to face the threat of Allied invasion alone.

Food situation was reported to be growing worse in Italy. Black market coffee was being used as money.

General Eisenhower announced that the total count of prisoners taken in Tunisia exceeded 200,000.

In the House of Lords, Lord Cranborne said that the victory in Africa was a victory which could hardly be paralleled in modern history.

20TH MAY.—The island of La Galite, the most important in the small group of islands off the north coast of Tunisia was occupied by French naval forces on May 18. American heavy bombers raided Pantellaria. Enemy shipping in Trapani harbour was also attacked.

Mr. Attlee, Deputy Prime Minister, stated that about 70,000 casualties were suffered by the forces of the United Kingdom, Canada and India in the North African campaign.

21ST MAY.—The New York radio reported that the Germans were withdrawing their land and naval units from Italy and the Mediterranean.

Bombs were dropped on Malta for the first time since December. Two raiders were shot down and several others damaged.

The Royal Air Force attacked enemy airfields in Sardinia. Flying Fortresses bombed the airfield at Grossetto in Italy. An enemy convoy was attacked between Pantelleria and Marettimo.

22ND MAY.—Allied bombers and fighters smashed Axis air bases and communications in Sicily and Sardinia. Eighty-six Axis planes were destroyed. An Italian communiqué admitted that considerable damage was done at Messina and Reggio de Calabria (in the toe of Italy).

Twenty-eight thousand British, French and American troops who saved Tunis from the Germans marched through the city in the biggest Allied victory parade of the war. General Giraud and General Eisenhower took the salute.

The Royal Air Force, in an offensive sweep over the Aegean Sea, restroyed a German seaplane and damaged an enemy sailing vessel. Messina was attacked. Objectives in southern Italy were also bombed. Flying Fortresses attacked Borizzo airfield in Sicily. Fires were started.

24TH MAY.—The German radio announced that German troops were in Sardinia.

The Royal Air Force pounded Pantellaria and Sardinia. A number of sweeps were made on enemy shipping in the Aegean Sea and along the west coast of Greece. Lampedusa and Messina were also bombed.

The Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Army, Marshal Vassilevsky, in a message to General Eisenhower, said: "I congratulate you on behalf of the High Command of the Red Army on the victorious conclusion of the campaign in North Africa."

25TH MAY.—The Berlin radio announced the formation of an Albanian army to fight on the side of the Italians.

Field Marshal Smuts declared that the end of the war would come with great suddenness with irresistible impulse.

The North-west African Air Force attacked Sardinia. Twelve vessels were hit in the port.

American Liberator bombers raided the harbours of Reggio de Calabria and San Giovanni.

26TH MAY.—Nearly 400 Allied planes attacked Sicily, Sardinia and Pantellaria. Nine German fighters were shot down. An enemy merchant vessel was set on fire at Port Scuso.

It was reported that M. Laval had ordered the closing of all schools in and the evacuation of all children from Bordeaux.

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RUSSIA AND FINLAND

19TH MAY.—It was reported that Soviet Forces were concentrating in the areas of Tula and Kaluga. Big air battles were fought over the Kuban. It was disclosed that the Germans lost 500 aircraft in the last three weeks.

20TH MAY.—Strong Red Army attacks on the Kuban and Donetz Fronts were reported. Soviet troops in some sectors of the Novorossisk Front started active operations. The Soviet Air Force destroyed more than 500 Axis planes.

21ST MAY.—Soviet Artillery bombarded the second German defence ring before Novorossisk. The Berlin radio announced that a full-scale Russian summer offensive was expected any day on the Orel Front.

22ND MAY.—The Russians widened their bridgehead in Lisichansk region. Battles of local significance took place in several sectors of the Northern Donetz.

Russia's dissolution of the Third Internationale was hailed in Allied quarters as a major Soviet gesture for the estabishment of firm and solid relationship with Britain and United States, both for the remainder of the war and the critical post-war era.

[The Moscow radio broadcast a decree by the Executive Committee of the Communist International, recommending the disbandment of the Communist International.]

23RD MAY.—The Germans failed in their big counter-attack against the Soviet bridgehead at Lisichansk. Guerillas operating in the Smolensk region ambushed a German military train.

24TH MAY.—Soviet gunners broke up a large German Force in the Sevsk area. A Russian attack south-west of Velikie Luki led to a violent battle.

25TH MAY.—German Infantry detachments were repulsed near Izyum.

26TH MAY.—According to the Rome radio, eight million men were massed on the Russian battle front from Leningrad to Black Sea.

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SHIPPING

21ST MAY.—A new United States destroyer, *Downes*, was launched in California to replace the ship of the same name lost at Pearl Harbour.

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NEUTRAL COUNTRIES

19TH MAY.—The Chilean Government announced the rupture of diplomatic and consular relations with the Governments of Vichy, Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria.

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THE FAR EAST

19TH MAY.—The Japanese captured the Chinese General, Pang Pingh Sun.

United States troops established positions on the island of Attu in the Aleutians.

United States heavy bombers attacked Japanese installations on Ake island. Enemy aerodromes in New Guinea were bombed.

20TH MAY.—American pincers closed round the Japanese positions at Attu. Japanese troops fell back.

Chinese bombers raided the Japanese-held town of Chihkiang Chiska in Hupeh Province.

After studying Mr. Churchill's speech, diplomatic observers opined that Britain and United States may try to prevail on M. Stalin to grant the use of Russian Air Bases for an onslaught on Japan.

21ST MAY.—The Chinese forced the Japanese to retreat near Shanshien in Shantung Province.

President Roosevelt told a Press Conference that America was concerned with getting war materials of all kinds into China.

It was revealed by the Tokyo radio that Admiral Yamamoto, Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese Combined Fleet (who planned the Pearl Harbour attack), was killed "in an aircraft in the course of combat with the enemy" last April.

According to the Vichy radio, the Japanese had begun to evacuate Attu island. Bombs were dropped on the enemy-occupied Vunakanan airfield in New Britain.

22ND MAY.—Ground fighting flared up again in Mubo area in New Guinea. Heavy bombers dropped thousand-pound bombs in a series of harassing attacks on Gasmata.

A Japanese attempt to raid Exmouth Gulf, near Onslow, in Western Australia was foiled.

Attu village was completely destroyed and the battle for the island entered the final phase. Col. Knox, United States Secretary for the Navy, said that the Attu campaign was now in a mopping-up process with the Japanese facing liquidation or surrender.

23RD MAY.—It was reported that 17 out of the 22 American warships lost in the Pearl Harbour attack were back on active duty.

Allied bombers started fires in the wharf area at Kaimana and sank a 500-ton vessel.

Three Japanese bombers made another raid on Exmouth Gulf, West Australia. The bombs fell harmlessly into the sea.

An announcement from official Chinese quarters revealed that a big Japanese offensive to the west of the Yangtse river front was about to begin.

United States troops launched a triple drive in Eastern Attu island against Japanese remnants holding out.

25TH MAY.—The Japanese captured the Yuyangkwan highway centre.

United States Army Forces continued to advance and exert pressure on Japanese Forces in Attu despite sleet, snow and rain.

26TH MAY.—United States troops wiped out the Japanese position in Chicagof valley in Attu island.

The Japanese captured Changyang.

MANURES

A plant is a living thing and hence needs food for its growth. It has to find its food-materials from the soil which surrounds the roots and the air enveloping the shoot. As plants are continually absorbing food materials from the soil, we have to add fresh supplies of them. Any substance added to the soil for increasing its fertility may be regarded as a manure. Manures may directly supply the food of the plant or they may act indirectly by (1) improving the physical condition of the soil (2) having a chemical action on the substances present in the soil, thus making them soluble.

Manures are of two kinds (1) organic manures consisting of vegetable or animal matter (2) inorganic manures or mineral salts, sometimes called artificial manures. Most of the essential elements for the growth of plants are required only in small quantities and are present in practically all soils. The chief materials removed from the soil by plants are nitrogen, phosphorus and potash and hence must be added to the soil under cultivation.

Nitrogen :—Is mainly responsible for the growth of stem and leaves; hence nitrogenuous manures should be added in the early stages, when the plants are growing vigorously, and are specially useful in the cultivation of leafy vegetables. When there is a shortage of nitrogen, the plants fail to grow normally, and the leaves turn yellowish.

Phosphorus :—Stimulates and promotes the production of flowers and the growth of fruits. A deficiency of phosphorus is indicated by the leaves turning bluish-green.

Potash :—Encourages the formation of starch and sugar. When potash is deficient, the leaves usually become spotted.

COMMON ORGANIC MANURES.

1. *Cattle manures*.—The most important manures for vegetable growing are those of organic origin since they usually contain nitrogen, phosphorus and potash. Out of organic manures, cattle manure is the most useful, and it is also easily obtained; but a great deal of it is wasted by turning it into "dung cakes" which are used as fuel. Cattle manure consists of not only cow dung, but also the liquid excrement, mixed with the waste food material in the cow-shed. These should be collected from the shed daily and put into a pit, and allowed to rot. Well-rotted cattle manure contains most of the constituents of plant food and is the best manure for vegetables.

Goats' dung.—Is also a good manure; but its action is comparatively slow.

Bones.—Are rich in phosphoric acid, lime and nitrogen. One of the commercial products of bone is "bone-meal" and this can be used in soil poor in phosphorus and lime.

Leaf mould.—Leaves when allowed to decay in a pit is usually rich in potash and nitrogen.

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